

## **Global Focus: The European Business School Librarian Group**

NIKOLAUS BERGER

Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria  
Nikolaus.Berger@wu.ac.at

The European Business School Librarian Group (EBSLG) (<http://www.ebslg.org>) currently has 38 members in 17 countries across Europe. Most of our members are from dynamic organizations and constantly adapt to developments. Maybe such organizations are attractive to top librarians who constantly develop themselves and are open for change. However, in the last 2 years some members left for other positions in libraries, IT, accreditation offices, and private consulting firms. Thus, we have some member replacements.

Looking at Europe's map and other quality business schools, we recognize that there are interesting institutions that are so far not represented in our organization. We have started an initiative to expand and have contacted library heads where we think they would fit well into the EBSLG.

Beyond a lot of topics that will be raised later, there are currently two issues with heavy impact across Europe: the war in the Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Russian invasion into Ukraine is in Europe and only a few miles away from EBSLG members. Thousands of refugees travel across Europe. Ukrainian kids join school classes. People leave rooms and flats for them, and there are projects going on to gather useful things and donations. Some offer free library access for students; some suffer with Ukrainian staff members who are in contact with relatives at home, and so on. We are shocked and deeply affected by this war.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a lot of local rules and regulations which had to be adapted for local library services. Distance rules, lockdown closings and reopening, hygienic support facilities, COVID-19 tests, and vaccination controls at library entrances became daily routines. There have been separate rules for staff members and users for workdays and in the case of an infection. Staff leaders have to know the rules in detail and have the responsibility to implement, adapt changes and ensure that all follow these rules. Especially in libraries with low staffing, absences due to COVID-19 led to lack of services.

The pandemic was a driver for digitalization, remote, and hybrid services. It was interesting how much was now available online that was a no-go either by vendors or academic staff before. We also struggled with the dual burden of hybrid services. Some lecturers and students wanted their service locally and others remote. This was in some areas impossible due to limited staff resourcing.

In some libraries the development of remote services led to a rethinking of space. Some had to face a reduction of their space, and others had to start with multiuse of library space. On the other hand, being allowed to work at your library after lockdown times was also a nice experience. Space became a new value. An EBSLG project was about collecting ideas of coworking space in libraries.

Libraries had to realize that their international students sometimes were not able to travel. Borders were closed. Digital content was key in such situations, if available. Some libraries started special scanning services to provide content for these students.

We also recognized the uncertainty of what is coming next, for both people and organizations. Human beings tend to control their lives and what is going on. In this pandemic we have to face a lot of unknown things, and this leads to nervousness, anguish and stress. This was an additional fact that leaders had to realize and care about in their staff duties.

Unsurprisingly, in our last two conferences--online in 2021 and in Oxford, Great Britain 2022--redefining library as spaces, digitalization and technology, and post-COVID-19 adaptations of services have been our topics. Mostly everyone on the EBSLG network benefits from sharing information about vendor solutions to remote access during pandemic times. We all required access possibilities for faculty and students for resources vendors have not provided before or only at unreasonable costs. Some vendors want to cut such remote services now, and feedback from users who have gotten used to it and don't want to lose it is strong.

Sustainability and the COP26 objectives (<https://ukcop26.org/>) led to some initiatives and projects in libraries across Europe. Sustainability in services is a hot topic and an honest goal for organizations and people. So far knowledge sharing and joint work on ideas and innovations helps a lot.

Another ongoing discussion is about fake news and misinformation: how to develop our staff, how to integrate it into services, and how to raise awareness. Predatory journals, bibliometric research, and open access were also discussed. Especially the latter always has room. In countries with legal rules, some business research institutions reached approximately 100% open access for their research output; others with only open access policies achieved rates like 20% or 30%. Plan S (<https://www.coalition-s.org/>) has been signed by some countries, and a lot of research funding institutions implemented in their rules a requirement to follow Plan S if you run a project funded by them.

Some other topics in our discussions and meetings were data management, data carpentry, data visualization, resource wayfinding, reading list software, Alexa for basic services, discovery services, text & data mining, catalogue and repository for teaching materials, and pro & cons of having a library committee.